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SENSITIVE
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AF/S FOR B. WALCH
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS

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TSPL, ZI
SUBJECT: EXPERIENCE ENGAGING DIASPORA COMMUNITIES: HARARE

REF: STATE 86401

11. (U) This cable responds to questions presented in Ref.

12. A. (U) To what extent are diasporans from your host country an identifiable community? Are there existing diaspora networks, organizations or online communities available as platforms for outreach?

i) (U) Estimates by NGOs, diplomatic officials, and press accounts of the size of the Zimbabwean community residing outside of Zimbabwe range from 2.5 million to 3.85 million people. These Zimbabweans consist of a mix of professionals and semi-skilled migrants who now predominantly reside in South Africa, the UK, Botswana, the U.S., and Australia. According to the International Organization on Migration (IOM), the largest diasporan community is in South Africa, where IOM estimates that as many as 3.1 million Zimbabweans reside, the majority of whom are illegal migrants. Other countries with sizable Zimbabwean populations (estimates from IOM) are the UK (400,000), Botswana (200,000), the U.S. (100,000), Australia (22,000), Canada (20,000), New Zealand (7,000) and Namibia (2,000). Migrants in these countries tend to belong to identifiable communities.

ii) (U) Most existing diaspora networks are located in South Africa with some connection to other countries. These include Global Zimbabwe Forum, Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber, Diaspora Nurses Association, Progressive Teachers of Zimbabwe in South Africa, Creative Writers Association Workshop, and Peace and Democracy Project. They act as useful platforms for outreach. The IOM utilized them when it organized a Zimbabwe Diaspora Engagement Workshop in May 12009.

1B. (U) What is the nature of the connection of the diaspora community to the host country?

i) (U) It is common for Zimbabweans in the diaspora to maintain close ties with their families in Zimbabwe and to support them economically. Many low- and semi-skilled workers have left Zimbabwe because of the collapse of the agricultural, mining, and industrial sectors and remit portions of their meager wages. Higher-skilled migrants, who have left Zimbabwe for either political or economic reasons, are generally earning higher wages and able to send back larger amounts.

ii) (SBU) Some highly educated migrants have maintained their memberships in Zimbabwean professional associations. For example, the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Medical Aid Association (ZIMA) told us that many doctors in the diaspora keep their dues current with ZIMA even though they

may have left Zimbabwe years ago.

iii) (SBU) Many diasporans are active in the political discourse on Zimbabwe despite still being denied the right to vote in elections. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political party has branches in South Africa, the UK, the U.S., Australia, and Canada. These branches hold annual congresses and maintain close contact with the party in Zimbabwe through the MDC national chairperson.

1C. (U) To what extent has your host country or government activated its diaspora communities for humanitarian relief?

i) (SBU) While there have been instances when the diasporan community contributed to humanitarian relief efforts, this has not been at the instigation or encouragement of government. Last year, during a health crisis, medical equipment was donated to Harare Hospital. These sorts of efforts are initiated by members of the diaspora who often partner with international donor groups to provide ad hoc assistance.

1D. (U) To what extent is the diaspora community engaged in long-term investment in your host country?

i) (SBU) The diaspora community is not a significant participant in long-term investment in Zimbabwe. While there are a handful of entrepreneurs who have established successful businesses in Zimbabwe while living abroad -- the CEO of cellular operator Econet, Strive Masiyiwa, and mining executive Mutumwa Mawere for instance -- these are exceptions. Many potential investors in the diaspora left

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Zimbabwe due to differences with ZANU-PF and are reluctant to invest while ZANU-PF remains in power. Additionally, there are concerns about political instability and onerous investment regulations.

ii) (SBU) The diaspora community has shown some interest in real estate. Although investment in this sector has declined in the last three years, demand for houses by the diaspora is showing signs of increasing due to optimism following the establishment of the new ZANU-PF--MDC inclusive government in February.

1E. (U) To what extent is the diaspora community working toward scientific, engineering, medical, and educational institution building?

i) (U) Many skilled professionals have left Zimbabwe. These include large numbers of civil, mechanical, electrical and mining engineers. Within the medical field, numerous doctors and nurses have left. Numerous teachers have migrated to South Africa and other neighboring countries. In 2008, for example, Botswana hired a large proportion of the science and math teachers from the city of Bulawayo. Additionally, numerous Zimbabwean students are studying health, medicine, engineering, economics, finance, and science in the U.S., South Africa, and in other countries. While they are not currently engaged in institution building in Zimbabwe, they constitute a potentially valuable resource should local conditions improve and prompt their return.

1F. (U) To what extent is the diaspora community engaged in conflict resolution and peace building?

i) (U) The Zimbabwean diaspora has not assumed an active role in conflict resolution or peace building.

1G. (U) To what extent is the diaspora community engaged in meeting the health, education and welfare needs of indigenous peoples?

i) (U) The participation of the diaspora community in

meeting the health, education and welfare needs of indigenous peoples is predominantly focused on financial support to their families. The diaspora community sends funds back home to support their families with school fees, medical care and related household expenses.

ii) (U) Additionally, some in the diaspora are engaged in fundraising activities to support the work of NGOs and social welfare organizations as well as faith-based organizations in their home communities in Zimbabwe. Diasporans also volunteer their expertise when home in Zimbabwe on visits -- either formally or informally -- in order to assist such organizations and their communities.

1H. (U) To what extent is the diaspora community engaged in democracy promotion, electoral reform and civil society development?

i) (U) The diaspora community is active in promoting democracy, electoral reform and civil society development. This is done through the creation of websites such as Zimbabwe Situation, ZimDaily, the Zimbabwe Times, and the newspaper The Zimbabwean (distributed in Zimbabwe) and the placement of op/eds in newspapers throughout the world. Additionally the diaspora maintains contact with government officials in numerous countries and lobbies for support for democratic elements within Zimbabwe. In particular, the diaspora community is lobbying for provisions in a new constitution to give it the right to vote and the right to hold dual citizenship. These are positions that the MDC has embraced and is championing.

1I. (U) How would you characterize the level of concern and attention given to diaspora communities by your host government?

i) (SBU) Prior to the formation of the current inclusive government, the ZANU-PF-led government paid little attention to the diaspora. This was due to the belief that the diaspora population -- including skilled and semi-skilled migrants -- was supportive of the political opposition MDC party.

ii) (SBU) The MDC, which is now part of government, views

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the diaspora as an important resource and base of support. Consequently, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai has met with diaspora groups in the U.S., Europe and South Africa to address their concerns and encourage them to return to Zimbabwe.

1J. (U) If Post has undertaken programs to reach out proactively to diaspora community members, please share the circumstances that prompted the outreach effort.

i) (U) Post has no formal programs to reach out to the diaspora community. We meet from time to time with Zimbabweans residing outside the country who are visiting, and maintain contacts with some Zimbabweans in the diaspora, principally in South Africa.

1K. (U) If Post has received unsolicited requests from the diaspora community please share the nature of these request.

i) (U) Post has received many inquiries on how to give back effectively from former program participants and students from Zimbabwe who studied in the U.S.; these requests are on how to gain employment in Zimbabwe, how to seek local internship and volunteer opportunities, and how to participate in fund-raising efforts with community-based organizations.

1L. (U) To what extent has Post designed or participated in public diplomacy programs customized to diaspora community

needs and interests?

i) (U) The Educational Advising Center based in the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy has been working actively with Zimbabwean students who are studying in the U.S., or who have graduated and are working full-time, or are engaged in internships in the U.S. We have launched a Facebook page for them and actively engage them as speakers when they are home on holidays. We work to integrate them into our programming, especially for our pre-departure orientations and as speakers in our Food for Thought seminar series. Through the Embassy's USAP program (www.usapglobal.org), which assists Zimbabwean students to study in the U.S., we support a website, listservs and annual conferences, to foster communication among Zimbabwean students living in the U.S.

¶M. (U) In planning future programs and anticipating requests for assistance for diaspora community actors, what types of knowledge management tools and information materials would be most helpful to action officers at Post?

i) (U) Post would greatly benefit from a tool which would allow us to create a database to track the skills, interests, and levels of involvement of Zimbabweans in their home communities. This would allow us to capitalize on diasporans' ability to contribute to a Zimbabwean recovery.

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